

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 AID-05 DHA-02 PC-01 EA-07 /071 W
-----161204Z 017342 /43
R 161120Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8301
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KATHMAND 2016

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PFOR, NP
SUBJ: NEPAL FOREIGN MINISTER ON NEPALESE FOREIGN POLICY, B.P.
KOIRALA, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

1. FOLLOWING MY REPRESENTATION ON MAY 13 TO FIREIGN
MINISTER ARYAL ON CRITICAL ISSUES AT THE UPCOMING INTER-
NATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE (KATHMANDU 1995), ARYAL SAID HE
WOULD LIKE TO UTILIZE THE OCCASSION OFMY CALL TO EXPLAIN
THE CURRENT STATUS OF INDO-NEPEALESE RELATIONS, INCLUDING
INDIAN CHARGES REGARDING B.P. KOIRALA AND HUMAN RIGHTS
IN NEPAL. THE BASIC UNDERLYING SETTING, ARYAL SAID, WAS
NEPAL'S DESIRE TO MAINTAIN ITS INDEPENDENCE AND REMAIN
FREE FROM PRESSURES FROM BOTH OF ITS LARGE NEIGHBORS. THE
CURRENT INDIAN PRESSURES, HE SAID, ARE BASICALLY NOTHING
NEW. BUREACRATS IN INDIA HAVE PERENNIALLY SOUGHT TO LIMIT
NEPAL'S QUEST FOR A BALANCED POLICY AND MRS. GANDHI WAS
OF THE SAME MIND;HE SAID HE FELT HE HAD MADE DOME HEADWAY WITH
FORMER FOREIN MINSTER CHAVAN IN EXPLAINING NEPAL'S INTEREST
IN A BALANCED FOREIGN POLICY, BUT"NONE AT ALL" WITH MRS.
GANDHI. HE BELEIVED THE CURRENT PRESSURES FROM J.P.
NARAYAN AND THE JANATA PARTY WER THEREFORE "NOT
DISINTERESTED": INDIA IS CONTINUING TO TRY TO INCREASE
ITS INFLUENCE AND TO MAKE NEPAL MORE DEPENDENT ON INDIA.
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2. THE PRESERNT SITUATION CONCERNING B.P. KOIRALA, ARYAL
SAID, INVOLVES BOTH NEPAL'S FOREIGN POLICY AND ITS
DOMESTIC POLITICS. WHEN DIFFERENCES FIRST AROSE
WITHIN THE NEPALI CONGRESS PARTY BETWEEN B.P. KOIRALA
AND OTHERS, INCLUDING HIS BORTHER M.P. KOIRALA, THE
INDIANS WERE N THE SIDE OF B.P. AND, WHEN SINO-INDIAN

TENSIONS WERE MOUNTING IN THE EARLY 1960'S B.P. WAS CLEARLY ON THE SIDE OF INDIA. AN OPENLY PRO-INDIAN STANCE BY NEPAL AT THAT TIME WOULD HAVE INVITED CHINESE PRESSURES ON NEPAL, AND THIS CONSIDERATION, ACCORDING TO ARYAL, WAS A MAJOR FACTOR IN THE KING'S DISMISSAL OF B.P. KOIRALA FROM THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP. HE SAID THERE ARE NO CURRENT PROBLEMS BETWEEN NEPAL AND CHINA, BUT NEPAL IS FULLY AWARE OF CHINA'S ABILITY TO BRING PRESSURES TO BEAR, AS IT DID WHEN IT SUPPORTED THE NAXALITES IN NEPAL. TO ACCOMMODATE TO INDIAN PRESSURES NOW REGARDING B.P. KOIRALA WOULD CERTAINLY RISK COUNTERPRESSURES FROM CHINA, HE SAID.

3. IN TERMS OF NEPAL'S DOMESTIC POLITICS, ARYAL SAID, THE KING IS IN FAVOR OF FREEDOM, BUT NOT UNRESTRICTED FREEDOM. THE NEPALESE PEOPLE ARE UNEDUCATED AND THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SETTING IS NOT CONDUCTIVE TO UNRESTRICTED POLITICAL ACTIVITY. THE KING BELIEVES THAT PARTY-LESS PANCHAYAT DEMOCRACY BEST SERVES NEPAL'S NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES AND MOST NEPALESE SUPPORT THIS POSITION. HOWEVER, THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID, THERE IS DISCONTENT WITH SOME ASPECTS OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM, SUCH AS ELECTIONS BY CONSENSUS. HE WANTED TO TELL ME IN STRICT CONFIDENCE THAT SEVERAL MINISTERS, INCLUDING THE PRIME MINISTER, ARE ALSO UNHAPPY WITH ELECTIONS BY CONSENSUS, BELIEVING THAT THE NEPALESE PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE IN CHOOSING THEIR PANCHAYAT REPRESENTATIVES. ARYAL SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT WITHIN A YEAR THERE WOULD BE SOME CHANGES IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PRESENT SETUP, INCLUDING A MOVE AWAY FROM UNCONTESTED ELECTIONS.

4. ARYAL SAID HE HOPED PEOPLE ABROAD UNDERSTOOD THAT B.P. KOIRALA WAS BEING TRIED FOR CRIMINAL ACTS AND NOT FOR HIS POLITICAL BELIEFS. THE CRIMES WITH WHICH HE IS CHARGED INCLUDE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIJACKING AN AIRCRAFT, THROWING A BOMB AT HIS MAJESTY, AND MOUNTING AN INVASION OF NEPALESE TERRITORY FROM INDIA. HOWEVER, THE KING IS NOT VINDICTIVE AND IF B.P. IS PREPARED TO ACT AS A LAW-ABIDING NEPALESE CITIZEN, THERE IS ROOM FOR PARDON OR COMMUTATION OF SENTENCE. BUT, ARYAL NOTED, WHEN B.P. WAS LAST RELEASED FROM PRISON IN NEPAL, HE CHOSE TO GO TO INDIA RATHER THAN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KATHMANDU 2016

STAY AND WORK WITHIN THE SYSTEM IN NEPAL.

5. THE FOREIGN MINISTER WENT ON TO SAY THAT IT IS NOT CORRECT TO ARGUE, AS J.P. NARAYAN AND JANATA DO, THAT THERE IS NO OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN NEPAL. FOR EXAMPLE, B.P. KOIRALA HAS BEEN ABLE TO BRING A HABEAS CORPUS WRIT. IN ADDITION, THE NEPAL POLITY WAS NOT A CLOSED AFFAIR AND IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR PEOPLE OF HUMBLE ORIGINS, LIKE HIMSELF, TO RISE TO THE TOP. FINALLY, HE SAID, HE THOUGHT SOME INDIANS HAD AN INADEQUATE APPRECIATION OF THE VITAL AND ESSENTIAL ROLE WHICH THE KING PLAYED IN ENSURING STABILITY AND NATIONAL COHESION IN NEPAL.

6. THE FOREIGN MINISTER CONCLUDED THAT, "SPEAKING PERSONALLY", HE VERY MUCH HOPED THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD NOT FURTHER REDUCE ITS PRESENCE IN ASIA. HE THOUGHT THAT SUCH A REDUCTION IN THAILAND INVOLVED CERTAIN DANGERS FOR THE AREA, AND HE ESPECIALLY BELIEVED THAT A CONTINUING U.S. PRESENCE IN SOUTH KOREA WAS ESSENTIAL TO DETER THE COMMUNISTS.

7. COMMENT: THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S COMMENTS SEEMED TO BE DESIGNED TO HELP ENSURE, AS HE NOTED AT ONE POINT, THAT
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"FOREIGN FRIENDS" UNDERSTAND NEPAL'S POSITION ON THE CURRENT B.P. KORALA PROBLEM IN ITS DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS. WHILE KORALA HAS MADE A NUMBER OF STRONGLY WORDED STATEMENTS AGAINST CHINA IN RECENT YEARS, IT SEEMS DOUBTFUL THAT THIS ASPECT ALONG

WEIGHS HEAVILY IN THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO
TRY HIM. NONETHELESS, IT IS A USEFUL ARGUMENT
WHICH ARYAL AND OTHERS CAN USE TO DEFEND THE
GOVERNMENT'S ACTION, PARTICULARLY WITH THE CHINESE
IN KATHMANDU WHO IN THE PAST HAVE EXPRESSED CON-
CERN OVER WHAT THEY SEE AS NEPALESE ACCOMMODATION
OF INDIAN INTERESTS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, HUMAN RIGHTS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, POLITICAL PRISONERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 16-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977KATHMA02016
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770173-0158
Format: TEL
From: KATHMANDU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770554/aaaabuer.tel
Line Count: 178
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 38254693-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2508294
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEPAL FOREIGN MINISTER ON NEPALESE FOREIGN POLICY, B.P. KOIRALA, AND HUMAN RIGHTS
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, NP, IN, (ARYAL, KRISHNA RAJ), (KOIRALA, B P)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/38254693-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009